Festival of Farms - July 16, 2011

Festival of Farms™ is an opportunity to learn about sustainable agriculture, network within the community, and have fun at various farms across the state. The Festival is unique to each chapter, but the goal is the same—to build a unified sense of SFA’s presence in communities across Minnesota and tighten connections within the local food community.

Currently, 4 SFA chapters are planning to put on Festival of Farms events.

Central Chapter's will start at 9:00 at Acorn Ridge Farm north of Staples, MN.

For more details on the SFA Central Chapter Festival of Farms and to buy tickets, click here.

Cannon River SFA (Northfield Area) is partnering once again with Just Food Co-op of Northfield, who will be providing the bus. Just Food will also provide maps to the three farms for those not able to ride the bus.

For more details on Cannon River SFA Festival of Farms, click here

South Central Chapter of SFA is planning to tour 3 farms in the Wells, MN area. For more information click here.
Crow River Chapter will host their event in the North Metro area with two farms on the tour.

If your chapter is planning an event for Festival of Farms, and would like assistance in promoting the event, please let John Mesko know ASAP.

*** Late Breaking News***

From The 920 Blog:

Governor Dayton, at the recommendation of the Sustainable Farming Association, has set aside July 16, 2011, as Sustainable Agriculture Day in Minnesota!

Here's the complete text of the proclamation:

Whereas: Minnesota's identity, established over 150 years ago, is founded upon many hardworking, family farms that have sustained our great state since its inception; and

Whereas: Minnesota's natural resources, topography, and climate have combined to make it one of the most productive agricultural states in the union; and,

Whereas: Minnesota is a nationally recognized leader in the establishment of sustainable family farms supplying fresh, locally-produced food to farmer's markets, schools, colleges, universities, hospitals and grocery stores; and,

Whereas: Minnesota is poised to continue to grow in the number of farms producing food for direct consumption by Minnesotans:

Now therefore: I, Mark Dayton, Governor of Minnesota, do hereby proclaim July 16, 2011 Sustainable Agriculture Day in the State of Minnesota.

How cool is that? Even the Governor loves SFA and sustainable farming!

Executive Director's Note

Our Fiscal Year-End fundraising drive is rapidly moving toward our June 30 deadline. Thank you to everyone who has responded. I'm very pleased to announce that SFA has its first LIFETIME member. Tony Lourey of Kerrick has demonstrated the value being an SFA member has, and has committed to the Lifetime membership. Thanks Tony!

Lifetime memberships are great. You indicate your support for sustainable farming and local food through your donation to SFA. You also avoid those pesky renewal reminders. Forever! Each year, we'll have a fun gathering at our annual conference for lifetime members. Are you interested in joining the "Lifer" club? Lifetime Memberships in SFA are $1,000 and are good for the rest of your days! Just click the $1,000 box on the donation form, and we'll take care of the rest.

Of course, we are happy to count any sized contribution toward our year end fundraising goal of $5,000. We're not quite halfway to that goal. Would you consider helping us finish the fiscal year in a strong position financially?

If you are able to donate during this drive, we'd like to offer a couple of thank you gifts:

1. Every person donating $25 or more will receive a GrazeFest T-Shirt (while supplies last, sizes L and XL only)!!

2. Also all donations of $100 or more will receive the T-shirt and a Farming Forward DVD, as a small token of our appreciation.

3. Finally, anyone who donates $1,000 or more will be awarded a LIFETIME SFA MEMBERSHIP!
Everywhere I go, I hear good things about SFA, our members, and our work. If you feel good about us, please **send in $25** today. Thank you very much!

**Click Here to Donate to SFA**

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**Other News**

**SFA and Renewing the Countryside Plan Joint Fundraiser**

SFA has enjoyed a strong relationship with Renewing the Countryside recently, and we've joined forces once again to host the first ever, SFA/RTC Joint Fundraiser, July 31, 2011 at **Alexis Bailly Vineyard** in Hastings!

**Schedule**

- 5:30 Special VIP-only activities
- 6:30-9:00 Wine and Food Tasting

This is shaping up to be a fun event, but we need your help. To pull this off, we are looking for food and help!

1. **We are seeking donations of produce from SFA member farms.** Meat, cheese, eggs, veggies, fruit. If you would like to participate in this way, contact John Mesko at 763-260-0209 or john@sfa-mn.org
2. **We need a food coordinator.** Someone who can talk with the chefs and make sure we have what they are looking for to make their delicious offerings.
3. **We are asking sustainable ag-related business to consider donating some items to be included in a "SWAG" bag (Sustainable and Wonderful Agricultural Gear).**
4. **We'll need 5-10 people to help with set up and take down.** More on that later.

More details will follow soon!

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**Out & About**

**DO YOU WANT TO FARM?**

Then this training program is for you! The **Land Stewardship Project's Farm Beginnings** [www.farmbeginnings.org](http://www.farmbeginnings.org) program is now accepting applications for the 2011-2012 courses. The courses will be held in two locations: **Hutchinson** and **Rochester, Minnesota**.

Farm Beginnings is a training program focused on getting more farmers on the land, farming sustainably. The 10-month program is intended for people of all ages interested in starting a farm business as well as established farmers pursuing a new farming enterprise. Farm Beginnings participants learn goal setting, financial planning, enterprise planning, marketing, sustainable farming methods and become connected to a supportive network of farmers and resource personnel.

Farm Beginnings classes run from late October 2011 to March 2012 (approximately two classes per month) and are led by farmers and other agriculture professionals. The in-class portion of the program is followed by an on-farm educational component that includes farm tours, field days and connection to the LSP Farmer Network. The course fee is $1500 for two people on the same farm enterprise (partial scholarships and flexible payment plans available). Interest–free livestock loans are also available for Farm Beginnings graduates.
The application deadline is August 1, 2011 and space is limited!

For more information on LSP’s Farm Beginnings course and to apply, please visit www.farmbeginnings.org or contact LSP’s Karen Benson at 507-523-3366 or lspse@landstewardshipproject.org.

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**Ziebarth Celebration**

The 2010 Farmer Emeritus Carl & Betty Ziebarth invite sustainable farming friends to an open house for Carl’s 95th birthday and their 60th wedding anniversary. The event will be Sunday July 17, 2011 from noon until dark at their farmstead-- 21876 Davis Ave. Faribault, MN. A pig roast picnic will be from 12:30-2:30 pm. Please RSVP to Ann Ziebarth by phone at 651-645-0953 or by email at aziebart@umn.edu

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**SFA Connect is your bi-weekly link to the Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota**

The Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota is a chapter-based, statewide non-profit organization that supports the development and enhancement of sustainable farming systems through innovation, demonstration, education, and farmer-to-farmer networking. If you, your farm or organization has any upcoming events that you would like posted on the SFA Community Calendar, email info@sfa-mn.org.

**Sustainable Farming Association of Minnesota (SFA)**

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763-260-0209 • info@sfa-mn.org

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